

Nepotism in fire and police departments
(SB 804 by Zaffirini/Collazo)

DIGEST: SB 804 would have stipulated that, in determining eligibility for a beginning position in the police or fire department, or in selecting an applicant for such a position on the basis of the highest police academy test scores, an applicant's relationship by consanguinity (blood) or affinity (marriage) to a municipal employee may not be taken into account.

GOVERNOR'S
REASON

FOR VETO: Allowing relatives to work together can often cause conflicts and problems that justify rules and guidelines relating to nepotism. Each city should have the flexibility to adopt its own rules and guidelines, and state law should not mandate that nepotism be disregarded as a factor in employment decisions.

RESPONSE: Rep. Frank Collazo, the House sponsor of SB 804, said he regretted the governor's veto of SB 804 and disagreed with his reasoning. Rep. Collazo said: "This legislation would not take power away from any cities but would insure fairer treatment of individuals interested in working for a municipality. SB 804 simply provides that cities may not take an applicant's blood relationship with a municipal employee into account when considering him for a beginning position in the fire or police departments. The applicant would still have to meet all city requirements for employment. Furthermore, I am not concerned with favoritism or other abuses of such a system because SB 804 would apply only to civil service cities, and strong protections are included in the civil service guidelines," Rep. Collazo said.

"I am especially disappointed in this veto because it prevents many good civil servants from working in our cities," Rep. Collazo said. "Often, police work and firefighting are family traditions where the dedication and commitment to protect the public is passed down from generation to generation."

NOTES: The House Research Organization analysis of SB 804 appeared in Part Two of the May 23, 1989 Daily Floor Report.